

Congress authorizes and appropriates funds for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to conduct water resources studies and projects for navigation, flood and storm protection, ecosystem restoration, and an array of other purposes. For instance, through the Corps' existing authority to address flooding, the Corps is able to conduct studies and initiate construction projects to address flooding along the Susquehanna River, and in Oneida and Herkimer Counties.

Through periodic enactment of Water Resources Development Acts (WRDAs), Congress modifies existing authorities that the Corps already has and gives the Corps new authority to conduct studies or undertake projects that are consistent with the Corps' mission. Normally, Congress considers a new WRDA every two years or so. This cycle was loosely followed for a number of years. Controversial projects and policy changes prevented WRDAs from being enacted between 2001 and 2006. The last WRDA was enacted in 2008, when Congress overrode the President's veto of the legislation.

WRDA projects are undertaken by the Corps of Engineers, but also require a non-federal sponsor to be responsible for local share of project financing. In many cases, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) will work in consultation with the Corps to coordinate projects within New York State. The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure requires that Members include a letter of support from a potential non-federal sponsor for each WRDA request they submit. These letters of support do not legally obligate the non-federal entity to commit funds, but merely demonstrate that local support exists for the requested project or Army Corps authority to be included in WRDA.

It is important to note that the WRDA process only authorizes projects. It does not provide any funding. Once a project is authorized, Members of Congress must request funding for a particular project, and that the Army Corps be directed to undertake the project as a "new start," through the annual Congressional appropriations spending bills.

The following is a list of the items that I have requested be authorized in the WRDA that Congress is expected to consider in 2010. The entity that submitted a letter of support as the

potential non-federal sponsor is listed for each request.

Note: Projects are listed by the Army Corps of Engineers District in which they lie.

ARMY CORPS - NEW YORK DISTRICT

To authorize the Secretary of the Army to undertake Critical Restoration Projects within the Mohawk River Watershed in New York. The Corps is currently conducting a Federally-funded study to determine what assistance it can provide planning, designing and implementing projects that contribute to protection and enhancement of water quality, water supply, ecosystem and other water related issues within the

[Mohawk River Watershed](#)

. This request would more clearly define the range of projects that the Corps can undertake within the Mohawk River Watershed. The request would allow the Corps to develop a general management plan for the watershed, in conjunction with NYSDEC and the NYS Canal Corporation, and provides that the general management plan would be entirely Federally-funded. I joined with Rep. Scott Murphy, Rep. Paul Tonko, and Rep. Bill Owens in submitting this request.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$40,000,000 (total for all projects for this purpose)

Letter of Support Provided By: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

A project for a sanitary sewer overflow abatement project in the Oneida County Sewer District. The Sanitary Sewer Overflow Abatement project was developed in 2007 after the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation mandated that Oneida County eliminate

sanitary sewer overflows from discharging into the Mohawk River by 2014. This request would allow the Corps to partner with NYSDEC and the County to make the required improvements.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$183,500,000 (for this project)

Letter of Support Provided By: Oneida County

A project for a sewer overflow control project in the City of Utica, NY. The City of Utica has entered into a Consent Order with NYSDEC to eliminate sewer overflows by building new separate sewers and treating the waters prior to their discharge into the Mohawk River before 2014. This request would allow the Corps to partner with NYSDEC and the County to make the required improvements.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$164,600,000 (for this project)

Letter of Support Provided By: City of Utica

A project to enhance dam safety at Ilion Reservoir #2, Ilion, New York. NYSDEC oversees dam maintenance, operation and repair, and monitors remedial work for compliance with dam safety criteria. Ilion Reservoir #2 Dam is a High Hazard dam, which means its failure could cause loss of life, specifically from flooding in the Village of Ilion. The dam is a critical component of the water supply system for the Village of Ilion. The Village is currently under a Consent Order with the NYSDEC to conduct remedial work at the dam to correct serious deficiencies, including embankment slope instability, by October 31, 2010, or face further fines. This request would allow the Corps to partner with NYSDEC and the Village to make the required improvements.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$1,000,000 (for this project)

Letter of Support Provided By: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

For study, design, and construction of smart growth and ecosystem-based management projects in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Watershed, NY. This request would allow the Corps to assist NYSDEC in the implementation of an initiative to help local governments in flood-prone areas along the Erie Canal to plan for future growth in ways that protect public health and safety, and which limits increasing the risk of future flooding. NYSDEC believes that initiatives of this sort represent the future of collaborative efforts between the Corps and New York State to address flood hazards across the state.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$25,000,000 (total for all projects for this purpose)

Letter of Support Provided By: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

ARMY CORPS - BALTIMORE DISTRICT

A project to review the completed Corps project at Bainbridge, NY, design and construct recommendations identified, without requiring economic justification. The request would

allow the Corps to undertake an investigation of how and why a gravel bar that has formed in the Susquehanna River, including whether it has been caused by a prior project constructed by the Corps at Newton Creek. The gravel bar has redirected the flow of the Susquehanna River, eroding the riverbank, undercutting Co. Rte. 39 and damaging the center pier of the NYS Route 206 Bridge. The Corps would be further authorized to construct any modifications recommended by its review.

Authorization Amount Requested: \$1,000,000 (for this project)

Letter of Support Provided By: Chenango County Board of Supervisors Resolution #343-07

To strengthen and expand the existing Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection Program, established in Section 510 of WRDA 1996. The existing program authorizes the Corps to provide design and construction assistance to State and local entities for the environmental restoration of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, which includes the [Susquehanna River Watershed](#)

. The modifications to the program would establish a small-grants program to assist local governments and non-profit organizations in carrying out small-scale projects to restore and protect the Bay Watershed. It will also allow the Corps to accept in-kind work from local entities to cover cost-sharing requirements. Most importantly, the modifications will correct the unintended omission of authority for the Corps to undertake these sorts of projects in New York, which is home to the headwaters of the Bay watershed. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed extends into parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and the District of Columbia. I joined a number of my Congressional colleagues in submitting this request, which was led by Rep. John Sarbanes (MD-03).

Authorization Amount Requested: \$50,000,000 (total for all projects for this purpose)

Letter of Support Provided By: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

ARMY CORPS - BUFFALO DISTRICT

The Corps' Buffalo District Office currently has broad authority to conduct water resources studies and projects for navigation, flood and storm protection, ecosystem restoration in the 24th Congressional District. The Buffalo District Office stated that it neither requires modification of existing authorizations, nor creation of new authorizations at this time. In the last WRDA enacted by Congress, I secured the following authorizations within the Corps' Buffalo District:

- Authorization for the Corps to provide assistance for a rehabilitation project to enhance dam safety for State Dam at Auburn.
- Authorization for the Corps to provide assistance for a water infrastructure project in the Towns of Springport and Fleming, Cayuga County.
- Authorization for the Corps to provide assistance for a water infrastructure project in the Town of Sennett, Cayuga County.
- Authorization for the Corps to conduct a feasibility study of an aquatic ecosystem restoration and protection project in the Finger Lakes, to address water quality and aquatic nuisance species.

Additionally, the Corps has existing authority to conduct a comprehensive investigation of measures to improve water supply, hydropower, fish and wildlife habitat, navigation, flood damage reduction, recreation, and water quality in the [Oswego River Watershed](#), which covers over 5,000 square miles in Central New York, including the Finger Lakes.

